

(Home Office) Northwestern Mutual  
Life Insurance Company  
605-623 North Broadway  
Milwaukee  
Milwaukee County  
Wisconsin

HABS No. WIS-268

HABS,  
WIS,  
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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. WIS-268

HOME OFFICE, NORTHWESTERN MUTUAL  
LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY

Location: 605-623 North Broadway (northwest corner of North Broadway and East Michigan Street), Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin

Present Owner: Charles Realty Company, 611 North Broadway, Milwaukee

Present Occupants: The many tenants include several law firms, advertising agencies, insurance and shipping companies, an architect, a physician, an engineer, a stock and bond broker, printing, real estate, and furniture companies, a direct mail service, and a data processing firm. The building also houses a U. S. Navy recruiting station, Navy processing and supply offices, a beauty salon, and two restaurants, together with the offices and classrooms of a business college.

Present Use: Commercial building

Statement of Significance: This landmark is a fine example of the Richardsonian Romanesque style and was designed by a well-known Chicago architect for a major insurance company.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1885-86. The date stone on the facade, above the central entry, reads "Erected A.D. 1886." On January 28, 1885, Northwestern Mutual's Executive Committee recommended to the Board of Trustees that a new home office be erected, and the firm's plans were made public in the Evening Wisconsin and Milwaukee Sentinel on January 29 and 30, respectively. Title to the property at Broadway and Michigan--lots 4, 5, and 6 of Block 8 in the Third Ward--was legally transferred to Northwestern Mutual from the Newhall House Stock Company on February 4. The purchase price was \$90,000. On April 17 the company applied for a permit to build (this permit is no longer on file, but according to contemporary newspaper stories, it was issued to Northwestern Mutual rather than to a contractor and the block's estimated cost was given as \$300,000). The two month lapse

between acquisition of the lots and application for the permit came about, in large part, because of a bill pending before the Wisconsin legislature in February and March 1885. Introduced by Assemblyman Henry J. Goddard of Chippewa Falls, the bill was designed expressly to prevent construction of the new block, and while its defeat was never in doubt, the company delayed signing contracts until the issue was resolved. By the end of April 1885, the last vestiges of the Newhall House were being removed from the site, and the contract for furnishing and setting the granite walls of basement and first story had been let. By April of the following year Northwestern Mutual's legal department had moved into the "New Insurance Building," as the press called it, with other departments following suit by May 1. The first policy was issued from the new home office on July 19, the first Board of Trustees meeting held there the next day; and on the following day, July 21, 1886, the building was dedicated. The City of Milwaukee and State of Wisconsin published in 1888 reports that block and lots had cost \$725,000. Initially, the insurance company occupied only the second floor, with all other rooms and suites made available for rental; and by June 1887, at the latest, all these had been leased. Among the early tenants were the Milwaukee Art School, the National Exchange Bank (southeast corner, first floor), Angus Smith and Company (southeast corner, third story), the Lake Shore and Western Railway (suite on the fourth floor), and West and Meyers Insurance (rooms on the first story).

2. Architect: Solon Spencer Beman (1853-1914) was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. In 1868 at the age of fifteen, he entered the New York office of the noted architect Richard Upjohn, where he remained for eight years. In 1876, Beman opened his own office in New York where he practiced until December 1879, at which time he went to Chicago at the invitation of George M. Pullman to undertake the design and construction of the company town of Pullman, Illinois. Other buildings executed by Beman include the Pullman Building (Chicago, 1881), the two Studebaker Buildings (Chicago, 1885 and 1888), Grand Central Terminal (Chicago, 1888), and the Pabst Building (Milwaukee, 1891). Beman also designed numerous residences in Chicago.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The building was erected for the Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company and served as the firm's home office from 1886 to October

1914, when the present home office, 720 East Wisconsin Avenue, officially opened. In 1923 Northwestern Mutual sold its former headquarters to the Milwaukee Mechanics Insurance Company, from whom the current owner purchased it twenty-three years ago.

4. Builders and suppliers: Evidently Beman himself supervised construction. The April 15, 1886 Evening Wisconsin states that the building "has been constructed entirely by Milwaukee mechanics;" it has not been possible to find either their names or those of the suppliers. The same paper's account of the injury suffered by Herman Radke, a hod-carrier, in July 1885, while work on the foundation was in progress, mentions "Contractor Bond" in passing, surely referring to Hiram R. Bond, a prominent local mason-contractor. From this one may infer that Bond's was the firm retained on April 24, 1885, to furnish and set the granite of basement and first floor walls, although he is not identified in the Evening Wisconsin's report on the contract, and that, further, his contract covered the entire foundation, including construction of the forty-two interior piers of Wauwatosa and Illinois limestones. Articles in the Evening Wisconsin for April 24 and August 22, 1885, relate that the granite--Fox Island for basement walls, Hallowell for those of the floor above--came from Maine and that Bedford (Indiana) sandstone was to be used for the upper portions of the street (south and east) facades. (Now painted, these walls, above first story, appear to have been built of Bedford limestone.) Because he was seriously injured during construction work, a second laborer, one Joseph Stielmowski, is mentioned by a local paper. The company history issued in 1908 names Robert W. Williams as "a consulting builder at the time of construction" (he later became superintendent of the block) and notes that Carl F. C. Schultz, in 1908 master of the elevators, had helped to install them. City directories of the mid-1880s list Williams as a builder, Schultz as a laborer. Other Northwestern Mutual records provided no additional information on contractors and suppliers.
5. Original plans: Not located
6. Alterations and additions: The files of the General Office, Building Inspection, contain numerous permits and records pertaining to alterations, along with forms listing and summarizing those permits issued during the period 1954-60 that have been removed from the files. The

chief changes documented by permits are listed below. In general, it can be said that aside from such comparatively minor matters as removal in 1917 of the overhead passageway joining this building and its neighbor to the west (Insurance Exchange Building); remodelling in 1928 of the store front in the west bay, ground story, south (Michigan Street) elevation; installation of aluminum-framed glass doors in the principal entrances on south and east; addition of various signs through the years; and the recent painting of south and east walls and portions of north and west walls, the exterior has not been modified. On the interior considerable work has been done, but even so, much of the original survives in the public areas about the impressive central light well. In lobbies and corridors on all floors, basement (ground) through fifth, substantial portions of the original flooring remains (warm-hued ceramic tile on ground through third floors, red and white ceramic tile and gray terrazzo on the fourth floor, gray terrazzo on the fifth story), as do sections of the two-toned brown marble wainscot, paneling, and trim on ground, first, and second levels, portions of the paneled wooden wainscot on floors two through five, and a number of original wood doors, door frames, and transoms on all six levels. The three staircases, the walls and arcades surrounding the central light well, and the fine glass and iron skylight all remain relatively unchanged. At every level most of the rooms and suites adjoining the public areas have been extensively remodelled--ceilings lowered, partitions changed, floors tiled or carpeted. In the main lobby, too, ceilings have been lowered and several walls covered with vinyl fabric. The two elevator shafts remain in their original locations, but have been altered.

- a. Permit No. 7406, June 1917, for wrecking the "bridge" connecting this building and the one across the alley to the west (Insurance Exchange Building).
- b. Permits Nos. 1454 and 1455, November 1922, for installation of two electric passenger elevators by the Otis Elevator Co., to replace the original hydraulic elevators.
- c. Permit No. 1570, February 1924, to install an electric dumbwaiter to operate between the fourth and fifth floors; A. Kieckhefer Elevator Co., contractor.

- d. No. 2820, February 1928, to remodel the store front on Michigan Street at the cost of \$500; Harold Warner, contractor.
- e. No. 4016, April 1931, to change office partitions (in unspecified locations) to accord with the wishes of new tenants; no structural changes; \$2,000 estimated cost; permit application signed by William G. Williams.
- f. No. 6265, May 1937, to "rearrange partitions and construct new partitions on the fifth floor;" Charles W. Valentine, architect; Hunzinger Construction Co., contractor; estimated cost, \$6,000.
- g. No. 15343, July 1937, "to reset partitions in the interior of office suite; corridor partitions and stairways not to be changed on the third floor of present store and office building;" Charles W. Valentine, architect; Ernst Hahn and Son, contractors; estimated cost, \$1,000.
- h. No. 22392, October 1937, to construct interior office partitions and partitions for men's and women's coat rooms and to install an additional lavatory on the ground floor; Charles W. Valentine, architect; Ernst Hahn and Son, contractors; estimated cost, \$2,000.
- i. No. 6662, March 1948, to enlarge a restroom on the fourth floor; A. J. Heinen, contractor; estimated cost, \$325.
- j. No. 155842A, June 1956, to install a new aluminum and glass entry and to lower ceilings of suite at 623 North Broadway; Taylor-Palmer Co., contractor; estimated cost, \$3,000.
- k. No. 160648A, July 1956, \$35,000 remodelling, including new partitions, wall panelling, and lowered ceilings, of the suite at 605 North Broadway then occupied by Paine Webber Jackson & Curtis; Donald L. Grieb, architect; completed and approved by January, 1957.
- l. No. 203495A, September 1957, "to remove vault on second floor and install structural steel to support floor above;" Vern K. Boynton, engineer; Siesel Construction Co., contractor; estimated cost, \$3,000.

- m. In January 1958, flames from the incinerator set fire to the basement causing some \$6,000 damage. Repairs, including replacement of ten joists and the damaged flooring, enclosure of the incinerator, and construction of a rubbish chute, were made, but there are no permits on file relating to these tasks. The one issued on January 24, 1958, to Lisch Electric Inc. for "repair of fire damage" is listed on a summary form.
- n. From 1954 to 1960, according to forms cataloguing permits granted in those years but subsequently deleted from the files, a great deal of electrical work--installation of innumerable outlets, switches, and fluorescent fixtures--was done. And still more such work is recorded in existing permits dating from 1960 to the present.
- o. No. 57334, October 1963, \$10,000 remodelling on the first floor, including partitions, wood panelling, new ceilings, alterations to rest rooms; Francis W. Biehl, engineer; Pieper Electric, Inc., electrical contractor.
- p. Nos. 98067 and 99885, January and February 1965, \$1,200 alterations to fourth floor restrooms; Charles Realty Co. (the block's owner), contractor; George E. Meiser, lath and plaster.
- q. No. 104211, April 1965, \$1,000 alterations to the second floor--"close door openings and set new partitions in the area presently occupied by women's toilet and lounge; cut new door openings for men's and women's toilet rooms; new fixtures; lower ceilings; install exit lights;" the owner is named as contractor.
- r. No. 18566, October 1967, to erect steel structure for a cooling tower, fifth floor and roof; Francis W. Biehl, engineer; Price Erecting Co., contractor; estimated cost, \$1,000.
- s. No. 193914, February 1968, to install lavatories on the ground story (for the Wayside Inn tavern-restaurant, 607 North Broadway); J. Brad, contractor; estimated cost, \$1,000.
- t. No. 195626, March 1968, \$13,300 remodelling of the passenger elevators; Haissig, Inc., contractor.

- u. No. 220728, January 1969, \$1,000 remodelling--"to erect partitions on the second floor to provide space for doctor's offices; new lowered ceiling to be installed;" Brad Construction Co., contractor.

Finally, it may be mentioned once again that the street facades have been painted. This work was done in 1966 by the Brant & Neilsen firm of Milwaukee who used a special epoxy resin paint.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

1. Northwestern Mutual was founded in Janesville, Wisconsin, in 1857 as the Mutual Life Insurance Company of the State of Wisconsin. Chartered in March of the same year, the fledgling firm issued its first policy in November 1858, and in March of the following year transferred operations to Milwaukee, moving into two rooms in an unpretentious little block at the southwest corner of Wisconsin and Main (now Broadway). (This small structure was razed in 1899 and replaced by the Railway Exchange Building.) When the lease on these quarters expired in 1862, the company rented space in the newly completed Iron Block (WIS-251) at Wisconsin and Water. In 1865 the firm was given its present name and bought and occupied an Italianate block at 416 Main Street, formerly the property of one Lewis Blake. Meanwhile, from 1863 on, Northwestern Mutual had been purchasing parcels of land at the northwest corner of Main and Wisconsin and by 1868 owned a site sufficiently large to allow construction of a commodious office building. Milwaukee's Edward Townsend Mix drew the plans for what was to be the first of three local buildings erected specifically for the company--a fanciful, mansard-crowned Victorian Gothic edifice that opened as Northwestern Mutual's home office on April 28, 1870. (Both this building and the one at 416 Main have been demolished.) By the early 1880s the firm had outgrown these quarters and after weighing the possibility of building one or more additions, decided to erect a new block--the building of 1885-86 documented in these pages. In Northwestern Mutual's history of 1908 one reads:

"At that time /1886/, it was thought that the second floor would be ample to accommodate the officers and employees for many years, but gradually departments have branched out in all directions until nearly the entire building is now used by the company. Indeed, on the first

day of May last, it became necessary to rent floor space in an adjoining building for the accommodation of part of the clerical force."

This situation reflects the awesome growth of the company during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries--during, that is, the tenure of Henry L. Palmer, president from January 1874 to July 1908: in these years Northwestern Mutual had risen to the ranks of one of the largest insurance firms in the nation. By 1910 steps were being taken to erect yet another building, this one to be occupied exclusively by the company; and a block-square site near the east end of Milwaukee's central business district was acquired that year. On July 17, 1912, the cornerstone was laid, and on October 21, 1914, the monumental Neo-classical edifice, designed by Marshall and Fox of Chicago, was dedicated. Enlarged in 1930 and later, this building still serves as Northwestern Mutual's home office.

2. Northwestern Mutual's block of 1885-86 rose on the site of the Newhall House, a famed early-day Milwaukee hotel. Built and furnished in 1857 at the cost of some \$275,000, the Newhall House was a six-story, 300-room edifice that ranked in its time as "the largest and finest hotel in the West." In the early morning hours of January 10, 1883, fire broke out in the basement and, bursting through the elevator shaft, spread rapidly throughout the building. Before the flames could be extinguished, seventy-eight guests and employees had lost their lives, giving the Newhall House fire grim status among the major disasters in Milwaukee history.
3. Brief comment on the Goddard Bill has been made above. This measure, formally Assembly Bill 222, was introduced by Henry J. Goddard, Assemblyman from Chippewa County, would, if passed, have amended the act incorporating Northwestern Mutual to prevent the firm's spending more than \$25,000 on repairs to or enlargement of its existing home office building and to prohibit construction of a new one. Although the bill had the support of a few policy holders, it was vigorously opposed by many others, by the Milwaukee press, by at least one Chicago publication (an editorial from the Chicago Inter Ocean denouncing the bill as "ridiculous" and "contemptible"--among other things--was reprinted in the Milwaukee Sentinel on March 12, 1885), and, of course, by the company's executives, several of whom travelled to Madison

to testify against it. Goddard's bill was referred to the Committee on Insurance, Banks and Banking, was reported back by this group, and was eventually disposed of by indefinite postponement.

4. During the winter of 1885 Northwestern Mutual's building committee and firm president Henry L. Palmer decided that the proposed new home office building should fill the entire site--that is, measure 180 feet on Broadway and 120 feet on Michigan Street--and should be a "good, substantial, solid building." They had determined, further, that it would consist of five stories and a basement. They planned that the basement would contain rental offices, the first story would have a bank in the southeast corner and offices for lease elsewhere, the second story would be occupied by Northwestern Mutual. The Evening Wisconsin for February 3 added that there would be two passenger elevators, while the Sentinel for the same day noted that a large courtyard with a skylight probably would occupy the central area of the building from first floor to roof. Later that month the building committee, firm president Palmer and an unidentified architect all went to Chicago to inspect new office buildings. They were apparently impressed by Chicago's First National Bank and began to think in terms of erecting a classical block. All these ideas except the choice of style, were incorporated into the final plans.

Northwestern Mutual's "Executive Committee Record" reported on March 3 that the building committee met and corresponded with Solon Spencer Beman of Chicago, Edward Townsend Mix of Milwaukee, and C. W. Clinton of New York before asking Beman and Mix to prepare preliminary plans and cost estimates. After examining the sketches and figures and holding additional conferences with both men, the committee unanimously recommended the adoption of Beman's design.

Beman began work on plans for the building in early March. While he was refining them he travelled with Henry Palmer and Charles D. Nash of the building committee to New York to study recently completed commercial blocks in the city. As soon as Beman finished a number of drawings for the structure, the building committee turned to consider materials to be used for the street elevations. They considered combining red granite at the basement and first floor levels with red stone or red brick above before settling on gray granites and gray Bedford stone.

The design of the building under Beman's direction became Richardsonian Romanesque rather than the classical style first envisioned by the building committee. It resembled several other projects designed by Beman at that time: The Pullman Building of 1884 in Chicago (now destroyed), the Studebaker Building (Fine Arts Building) of 1886, also in Chicago, and several structures in the new town of Pullman, Illinois. On March 7, 1885, the Evening Wisconsin remarked that Northwestern Mutual's new home office would be similar to the "greatly admired Pullman Block." H. H. Richardson's Cheney Block (1875-76) in Hartford, Connecticut and the Marshall Field Wholesale Warehouse (1885-87) exercised a marked influence on Beman's design for Northwestern Mutual's home office.

So pleased with Beman's work was Charles D. Nash that at the annual meeting of the Board of Trustees in July 1886, he offered a resolution recognizing the architect for his "great genius and unflinching integrity," expressing approval of the "beautiful and substantial structure he has designed and which has been erected under his supervision," praising him for negotiating "advantageous contracts," and, finally, commending him as "one of the leading men in his profession in this country and a most genial and worthy gentleman."

5. For a generation or more Northwestern Mutual's block of 1885-86 was popularly known as the New Insurance Building. In the early 1930s it was named the Loyalty Building after the Loyalty Group of insurance companies headquartered there. (The group is first listed at this address in the Milwaukee City Directory for 1931; its last listing as Loyalty Group occurs in 1957, and by 1958 its name had been changed to America Fore Loyalty Group.) While the Loyalty Building title is still current, the block's official name has been, for some time now, the 611 North Broadway Building.
6. The present building is one of four important old commercial buildings standing along East Michigan Street between North Broadway and North Water streets. Its neighbors include the Insurance Exchange Building (originally the State Bank of Wisconsin) (WIS-157), 210 East Michigan, an Italianate design executed in 1856-57; the Mitchell Building (WIS-156), 207 East Michigan, a sumptuously ornamented monument to the Second Empire style built in 1875-76; and the Mackie Building (originally Chamber of Commerce) (WIS-158), 225 East Michigan, another richly decorated edifice, dating from 1879-80. The last

two were designed by Edward Townsend Mix; the first may also have been his work. Both the Mitchell and Mackie blocks are now Milwaukee Landmarks. Northwestern Mutual's former home office, too, became an official Landmark in 1969. Individually significant as splendid examples of various Victorian-era architectural styles as well as for historical associations, the four together constitute the finest group of large nineteenth century business blocks remaining in this city.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old views: The July 16, 1885, edition of the Milwaukee Sentinel reports: "An elaborate pen and ink perspective drawing of the company's new building is on exhibition at the general office, and has been the object of much admiration by the agents." One wonders if this may have been the rendering by Paul C. Lautrup that was reproduced in the Inland Architect for July 1885. Apparently the drawing displayed at Northwestern Mutual has been lost, but it may well have inspired the handsome engraving, a perspective view from the southeast, published in the Evening Wisconsin on August 22, 1885 and the illustration signed "Marr & Richards Eng. Co." which appeared in The City of Milwaukee and State of Wisconsin of 1888 and may also have been the ancestor of the fine engraving published in the Milwaukee Sentinel on October 16, 1895. An excellent early photograph, a view from the southeast taken before 1899, is preserved at the Reference Library, Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company. A retouched version of this photo appeared in the history of the firm published in 1908, while similar photos were reproduced in the Sentinel's Illustrated Description of Milwaukee (1890), Milwaukee; 100 Photo-gravures (1892; introduction by Andrew C. Morrison), and Art Work of Milwaukee (1895). Two other early views, showing the building from the northeast, appeared in Milwaukee's Great Industries, edited by W. J. Anderson and Julius Bleyer and published in 1892 (this version is a Marr & Richards engraving that was republished four years later in the Evening Wisconsin's Album of Milwaukee Views) and in the second volume of John G. Gregory's History of Milwaukee (a photograph). For interior views the 1908 company history is valuable as it contains photos of the Trustees and Executive Committee Room, the President's office, central court, and main room of the Secretary's department. The firm's advertisement in the Evening Wisconsin for June 15, 1908,

includes five photographs of the interior--the "grand staircase," lobby, arcade seen from the fifth floor, view through arches on the fourth floor into the central light well, and a section of the Secretary's office. There are also quite a number of late nineteenth and early twentieth century photos of agents assembled for annual meetings and posed outside the main entry or inside the central court which provide glimpses of the architectural setting. These are to be found in the company's Reference Library. It may also be noted that all of the other buildings occupied by Northwestern Mutual during the nineteenth century are illustrated in the 1908 history.

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Prepared by Mary Ellen Wietczykowski  
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September 20, 1970

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This imposing well-preserved building is rich in ornamental detail. The interior is dominated by a handsome central arcade. The exterior, composed of rock-faced masonry, arcaded facades, and Romanesque-derived design elements, is Richardsonian in its inspiration.
2. Condition of fabric: Good

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: 180 feet north-south by 120 feet east-west; five stories plus high basement, sub-basement, and attic, except in the northwest corner of the building which is not carried up full height and has several levels, varying from two to four stories.
2. Foundations: Timber pilings; limestone spread footings; limestone foundation walls and interior piers.
3. Wall construction: Masonry bearing walls. In south and east elevations and south bay, west elevation, basement walls are rock-faced gray Fox Island granite; first story walls are rock-faced Hallowell granite, less heavily rusticated above and alongside the windows; second through attic story walls are rock-faced gray Bedford stone, with ornament and trim of the same material. Part of the fourth story, all of the fifth and attic story walls of the east bay, north elevation, are also rock-faced gray Bedford stone. Granite (except polished granite colonettes and trim at the main entry, south elevation, and two of the portals in the east elevation) and Bedford stone are now painted light beige. The remaining portions of the north and west walls are brick, the north wall partially painted light beige and the unpainted brick elsewhere now weathered to a deep, mottled gray. Interior framing is said to be cast and wrought iron.
4. Elevations: The east (main) facade comprises nine bays, the south elevation six bays. Typically, one bay of these street facades consists of: a triple rectangular window on basement level (this floor is below grade on the east but at grade along most of the south elevation

because of the slope of the site); an arched triple window, with dripstone and flanked by three-quarter engaged columns with floral capitals, on the first story; a triple rectangular window topped by an ornamental spandrel on both second and third levels; a round-arched triple window, with dripstone, on the fourth floor; three round-arched windows each flanked by an engaged column, and the whole tripartile composition contained by dripstones, on the fifth level; a castellated parapet is above the attic story. Pilasters two stories in height, with foliate capitals, mark the bays on the second and third floors. String courses provide horizontal divisions between first and second, fourth and fifth, and fifth and attic stories.

This scheme prevails in the southernmost bay of the west elevation and in all of the south elevation excepting the two west bays on grade. In the westernmost of these is a store front with entry to a restaurant occupying the southwest corner of the building. In the adjoining bay is the basement lobby entrance.

On the east (main) facade deviations from the general pattern are more numerous:

- a. Basement level: There are no windows in the second and fifth bays from the south, which are below staircases leading from grade to first floor. In the third bay is an entry to a tavern-restaurant; fourth and sixth bays have double rather than triple windows; seventh and ninth bays contain one door and two windows.
- b. First story: In the second bay from the south and northernmost bay are entrances to individual businesses on this level. In the fifth (center) bay is the building's main entrance. Here the arched opening is higher than other first story arches and is surrounded by a richly ornamented rectangular frame that breaks the line of the string course between first and second floors.
- c. Third story: Above the triple window, center bay, in place of an ornamental spandrel, is the date stone.
- d. Fifth and attic stories: In the three central bays these have been accorded distinctive treatment. On

the fifth floor are rectangular windows, two per bay; on the attic level, a like number of round-arched windows with dripstones. Windows are separated by pilasters having foliate capitals. In these three bays, finally, the castellated parapet is higher than elsewhere in this elevation.

The west elevation comprises nine bays, one of which is like those of the street facades and has already been described. In seven of the eight remaining, the pattern is as follows: basement (ground), first, and second stories, triple rectangular windows with stone sills and lintels and fluted muntins; third and fourth stories, three arched windows; fifth floor, three round-arched windows; attic level, blind arcade of four arches per bay. This pattern is broken on grade level in the third and fifth bays from the south, where there are entrances. The ninth (northernmost) bay of the west elevation includes the lofty brick chimney and is otherwise only two stories in height.

The north elevation, some of which is hidden by an adjacent building, is unprepossessing, consisting chiefly of unadorned brick walls with few window openings.

5. Chimney: Northwest corner of building; brick
6. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: As indicated, there are three entrances on the first story, east elevation, all reached by stairways leading from grade to first floor, with the central portal being the block's main entry. All three are recessed; all three, along with the public entrance on grade in the second bay from the west, south elevation, are now equipped with aluminum-framed glass doors. Others, also mentioned above, are as follows: 1) door to restaurant, west bay, south elevation, grade level; 2) doors in basement level, third, seventh, and ninth bays from the south, east elevation; and 3) entries in the third and fifth bays from the south, west elevation.
  - b. Windows: A number of the triple windows in the basement story, south and east elevations, have fixed center lights with narrow double-hung one-over-one sidelights, approximating the Chicago

window. First story windows in these elevations consist, typically, of a fixed center pane with double-hung one-over-one sidelights and curved transom lights almost all of which are filled in. Triple windows of the second and third floors are of equal size, each consisting of a double-hung one-over-one unit. Fourth floor triple windows are arched, double-hung, one-over-one units. Fifth floor windows are arched double-hung one-over-one, except, as stated, in the three center bays of the east elevation, where they are rectangular double-hung one-over-one units. Attic story windows in these bays are arched double-hung one-over-one. Windows above the first story apparently are wooden sashes, set in stone frames. Framing and muntins of windows in basement and first stories appear to be iron, presently disguised by many coats of paint.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape and covering: The roof is flat with an elevator penthouse and skylight. Original covering is unknown; present covering is tar.
- b. Framing: Wrought iron beams support the roof; iron arches frame the skylight.

8. Stairways: Granite staircases with pipe handrails lead from grade to first floor entrances in the second (from the south) and fifth (center) bays of the east elevation. The stairway to the first floor entry in the north bay of this elevation is iron, with concrete treads, iron balusters, and iron handrails. In the east elevation, also, are three stairways leading from grade to basement level: In the third, sixth and ninth bays from the south. All are iron. There is, lastly, an iron fire escape on the west wall.

C. Description of Interior:

- 1. Floor plans: Plans of basement through fifth floors are fundamentally alike in having offices and suites opening off all four sides of centralized public areas. The first through attic floors are oriented about the central light well, on the north side of which are the two elevators.

2. Stairways: The main staircase, open well type, is in the central court and joins the basement, first, and second stories. The floors above are connected by staircases north of the arcade; and there is a staircase southwest of the court which joins the basement and first floor. Treads of the last-named staircase and treads and landings of the main stairway are gray-white marble. On other stairways the treads are gray-black slate. All staircases appear to be iron and have painted decorative metal balusters and newels, the latter being surmounted by one or more inverted cones which are, in turn, tipped with balls.
3. Flooring: In public areas, multi-colored ceramic tile on basement through third floors, red and white ceramic tile and gray terrazzo on the fourth floor, and gray terrazzo on the fifth floor. As mentioned, flooring in the various offices and suites has been changed, and original floors remain in few of these spaces.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Walls and ceilings are generally plaster, although, outside of the public areas, they have been altered--ceilings lowered, walls panelled, and so on. Two-toned brown marble wainscot survives in public areas from basement through the second stories; panelled wooden wainscot remains on second through fifth floors. Walls about the central light well above the first floor are arcaded and are composed in three bays on east and west, four on north and south. An ornamental metal railing surrounds the central stairwell on the second floor. Arcade piers on this level are massive, square forms with foliate capitals, above which rise clustered engaged columns dividing the bays of the arcade on third and fourth floors. Along the east, west, and north sides of the arcade on the third story is an ornamental metal railing. The two east bays of the south wall, third floor, are closed; the two west bays have triple windows. On the north, elevator shafts and elevator lobby occupy the central bays. On the east, the three bays are fitted with three small rectangular windows each. On the fourth floor, arcade openings are arched, and on the east, north, west sides, and in the two west bays of the south side these arches enclose triple windows. As on the third story, the two east bays of the south wall are closed. The fifth floor arcade consists of two round-arched windows per bay, except, again, in the two east bays, south wall, where they are closed. Fluted rectangular pilasters and columns separate these openings. Lastly, on attic

level, there are three circular openings per bay. Horizontal moldings occur between the second and third, fourth and fifth, and fifth and attic stories. The arched skylight crowning the arcade is glass and iron.

5. Doorways and doors: Originally, there were wooden frames and doors, some of which remain.
6. Trim: Wood and marble
7. Hardware: Bronze and brass
8. Lighting: Electric
9. Heating: Steam. In the beginning a number of individual offices were also equipped with gas heaters set in cast-iron fireplaces (the fireplace in President Henry L. Palmer's office is illustrated in the 1908 history of Northwestern Mutual). Some of these are said to remain.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The building stands on the northwest corner of North Broadway and East Michigan Street and faces east. It is bounded by Michigan Street on the south, an alley on the west, an adjoining building on the north, and Broadway on the east. The site slopes up from southwest to northeast.
2. Enclosures: A painted cast-iron fence encloses the basement windows on the east side, and there is a painted pipe railing in front of grade level windows in the four east bays of the south elevation.

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PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were made during the 1970 Milwaukee Project under the sponsorship of the Milwaukee Landmarks Commission of the City of Milwaukee--Richard W. E. Perrin, Chairman--and were donated to the Historic American Buildings Survey. This project was the continuation of a program to record the historic architecture of Milwaukee begun in 1969, under the joint sponsorship of the Milwaukee Landmarks Commission and the Historic American Buildings Survey, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service, Department of the Interior. The project team included architect John Thiel of Milwaukee; architectural historian Mary Ellen Wietczykowski--now Mary Ellen Young--(Milwaukee Landmarks Commission); and photographer Douglas Green. The data was prepared for transmittal to the Library of Congress by HABS editors Carolyn Heath, Mary Farrell, Candace Reed, and Philip Hamp.

ADDENDUM TO:  
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Wisconsin

HABS WI-268  
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PHOTOGRAPHS

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